

MARCH-1935

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

OFFICIAL ORGAN HAPPY HOURS BROTHERHOOD

ROBBERS IN 1868

(Courtesy of Louisville Courier-Journal.)

It is interesting to contrast the methods of the two bandits who took \$17,000 in bonds and cash from the Southern-Deposit Bank of Russellville recently and of the four bank robbers who carried away \$10,000 from the Nimrod Long bank in the same town on the morning of March 20, 1868; more especially so, since the latter four were Jesse and Frank James, Cole Younger, and a Nelson County man named Jack Shepherd.

The recent robbers naturally used an automobile. The James gang was mounted on horses. The modern pair evidently made a secret reconnaissance, approached the bank early in the morning, tied up the janitor and others as they entered, struck only one man (a negro) who failed to raise his hands, and scooped up the money in rubber-gloved hands. For four or five days before the robbery of 1868, men who said they were buying horses for the western markets, opened an account in the bank and came in several times a day to make change or write checks. Marmaduke B. Morton, the cashier, described one of them as the finest specimen of physical manhood he had ever seen. This was Cole Younger.

On the day of the robbery the horse men stationed themselves at the corner of College and Main Streets, where the stone bank building still stands, and began shooting up and down both sides to drive everyone inside. Two entered the bank by front and back doors,

vaulted over the low counters, which had no railings, and emptied the open safe. Nimrod Long was shot at, when he resisted, and a bullet grazed his head. A Mr. Barclay, an employe, was struck. An ex-Confederate soldier named Malone, employed in the county clerk's office, started up the street, running from tree to tree, firing at the bandits. It was noticed after the bandits departure that the bandit bullets had peeled the trees where Malone took refuge. Malone winged one man, who was held on his horse by his companions.

In most particulars the methods of the bandits of the past and those of today, are quite alike. The machine gun and the motor car have aided the modern robbers, but radio and telegraph have obstructed them.

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THE DRAMA OF THE SEVENTIES...

I was turning over the pages of "Whitaker's Journal" for 1876 when I came across an article entitled, "The Drama--Down Whitechapel Way". It describes a place of entertainment not far from Whitechapel Church, and situated in a side street known as "Glimmers", in which it was customary to give dramas of the lurid and sensational type. These plays, according to Act of Parliament, had to be performed in those days in dumb show, and the prices of admission were distinctly modest as will be seen by the following scale: Gallery, 1d.. Pit 2d.. Boxes 3d.. and Stage Boxes 4d. These prices, in view of the present inflated entertainment charges, are decidedly refreshing. The drama discussed, was: "Sweeney Todd, the Barber of Fleet Street, or, The String of Pearls.", and the opening scene represented two shops in Fleet Street, one a barber's establishment, and next door to it, a pie shop. The comely proprietor of the latter is shown storming at Sweeney

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Todd (mutely) for not providing her with more material for her meat pies, as her customers resolutely decline to purchase any other variety, such as raspberry, apple or rhubarb, insisting upon meat pies, and meat only. A bill is left at Todd's shop offering a reward of 5,000 pounds, for the apprehension of a man who has stolen a string of pearls, and who may be recognized by a black mole upon his chin. Presently a customer enters the barber shop for the purpose of being shaved, at which the pie shop lady is so overjoyed that she promptly advances to the footlights and renders the pathetic ballad, "Mother, Kiss me, ere I Die". This has a distinctly humorous aspect, although no doubt quite unintentional on the part of the producer. This brings down the curtain on Act. I.. Act II discloses the interior of Todd's shop with Todd in the act of shaving his customer. As he takes off a strip of lather, it reveals plainly a black mole upon the man's chin. The barber is, for the moment, undecided what to do, and the customer, scenting danger, springs up from the chair, but a trap door opens, and the unfortunate victim is dragged through the opening by the lady who presides over the succulent dainties next door. This, I may mention, is departing somewhat from the story, but was no doubt thought to be more effective by the talented playwright. This concludes Act II, and the audience is left in a state of excitement and anticipation as to the ultimate fate of the man with the black mole, if one can judge by the feverish cracking of nuts and the audible munching of oranges. The third and final act depicts a baker's cellar with the luckless customer chained to a Windsor chair and forced to make pies, while Sweeney Todd abuses and ill-treats him because he will not disclose the whereabouts

of the string of pearls, which he has hidden in his bosom. (Not very convincing, this). While Todd is absent, the captive examines his treasure, but the eagle eye of the pie shop lady "spots it" and she instantly demands its surrender. Here with master diplomacy, he of the black mola at once makes violent love to the lady, and the two agree to elope together and set fire to Todd's shop. A fitting and sensational climax is secured, by Todd rumbling through his own trap door enveloped in flames, and the drama finishes.

What a pennyworth ! We have progressed greatly since the days when this crude class of entertainment was in vogue, but the public still has a relish for the gruesome and uncanny as portrayed in the grand Guignol type of drama and the sensational photo play.

--Henry Steele.

(Courtesy of THE PERFORMER)

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GEORGE FRENCH of Bloomfield, N.J. has also stepped into the limelight, too. Rudy Vallee the great singer of the air, has authorized George to act as one of his official photographers. Also, the American Annual of Photography for 1935 has selected one of his pictures as one of the best from thousands submitted from all over the world, and have used it in their Annual, also a full-page cut, short write-up and a copy of the book, all gratis. Lucky, isn't he ? We're all glad to hear it, George, and the best of luck.

Robert Burns of Baltimore and Edward J. Smeltzer of Philadelphia are jointly publishing THE NOVEL MART. No.1 was only two pages-No.2 was four pages. No.3 is four pages but larger..Watch this paper grow !

NOTE: This is a reprint of the original issue, which also contained various ads.

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